Hoover Says Nation Hotbed Of Violence

F Post 8-14-69

WASHINGTON (AP) — Each American's risk of becoming a victim of serious crime has nearly doubled since 1960, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover reported today.

Hoover listed the statistic, showing more than one out of every 50 Americans was victimized by crime last year, in his 1968 Uniform Crime Reports compiled from records of the nation's law enforcement agencies.

Declaring "there is no comfort in the cold statistics," Hoover said almost 4.5 million serious crimes were reported in 1968— a 17 per cent increase over 1967.

All categories of crime shared in the rise, he said, and population growth alone cannot account for the 122 per cent volume increase in the last eight years.

"Crime continues to outstrip population growth 11 to 1," he said.

Broken down by categories, the figures showed robberies increased 30 per cent from 1967 to 1968; forcible rapes, 15 per cent; murder, 13 per cent; aggravated assault, 11 per cent; serious larceny, 21 per cent; auto theft, 19 per cent; and burglary, 14 per cent.

Hoover said the increase in murders— from 12,090 in 1967 to 13,650 in 1968— reflected the "largest absolute rise over any prior year" in this decade.

As in the past, he noted, firearms were the predominant weapon and the South was the region where the most murders occurred— 47 per cent of the national total.

Overall, gun usage in criminal homicides increased 2 percentage points as firearms were the means for committing 65 out of every 100 murders.

Hoover said handguns accounted for 50 per cent of the 1968 homicides, rifles for 6 per cent and shotguns for 9 per cent. An assortment of lethal devices were used in the other 35 per cent.

Long a proponent of gun controls, the FBI director reported that firearms were the weapons for 65,000 assaults and 99,000 robberies as well as the 8,900 murders during the year.

Since 1954, he said, the use of firearms in murders has increased 71 per cent, in aggravated assaults 117 per cent, and in robberies 113 per cent.